

Saving

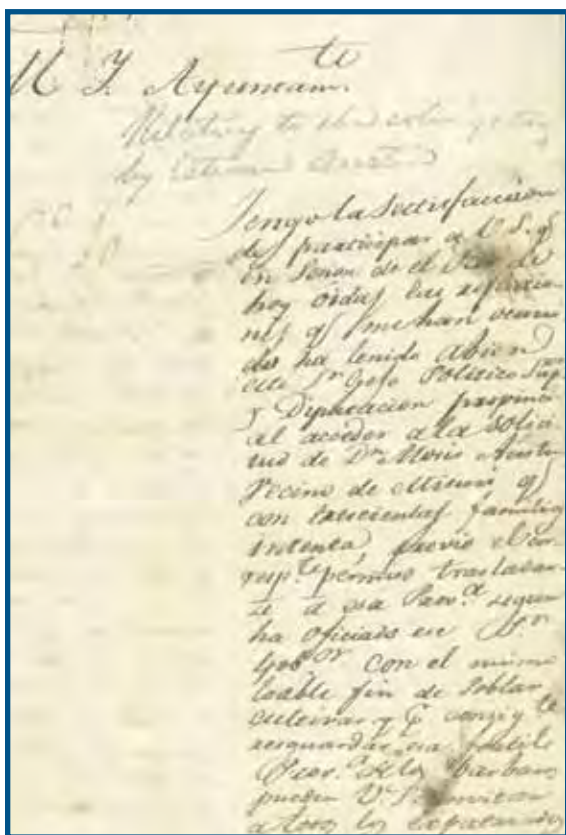
TEXAS HISTORY



The Texas General Land Office
Archives and Records Newsletter

Jerry Patterson, Commissioner

*Vol. 7 Number 1 * Fall 2010*



This document granted authority to Moses Austin to locate 300 families from the United States in Texas.

The Improbable Meetings of the Baron de Bastrop and Moses Austin

by James Harkins

What started as a chance meeting in a Kentucky tavern in late 1796, turned into a beneficial relationship for two of the most important figures in the Anglo-American settlement of Spanish and Mexican Texas. One man, Philip Hendrik Nering Bögel, better known in Texas as the Baron de Bastrop, was acting as a land developer in the Ouachita Valley District of Spanish Louisiana. He was recruiting families in Kentucky to go to Louisiana. The other man, Moses Austin, was a wealthy businessman looking for a new land to settle and business opportunities. The baron was not a wealthy man but exuded confidence and success. The two wouldn't meet again until 23 years later in one of the most crucial moments in Texas history—just minutes after Austin was kicked out of Texas.

Continued inside....

4 THE INAUGURAL SAVE TEXAS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM: DISCOVERING SPANISH AND MEXICAN TEXAS

5 SPANISH NORTH AMERICA BY JOHN THOMSON, 1814

7 GLO TRANSLATOR HONORED WITH PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

7 THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

THE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS PROGRAM
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

1700 North Congress, Ste. 131
Austin, Texas 78701-1495

Mark Lambert, Deputy Commissioner
512-463-5260

Susan Smith Dorsey, Director
512-463-5274

D'Anne Stites, Save Texas History
512-463-6740



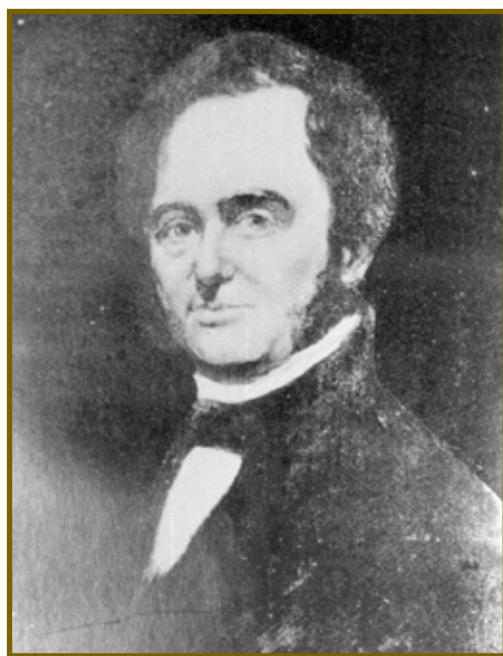
Saving Texas History is a publication of the Archives and Records Program of the Texas General Land Office. It is published quarterly and is available

by request or online at www.savetexashistory.org

The Texas General Land Office does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. To request special accommodations, call the Director of Human Resources/ADA Coordinator at 512-475-1390. To contact us by TDD call 512-463-5330 or through RELAY Texas at 1-800-735-2988, or mail your request to P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873.

Continued from page 1

In the years after the 1796 meeting, Bastrop had several business ventures that saw varying degrees of success, mainly focused on land dealings in the Ouachita Valley District of Louisiana. These land dealings forced Bastrop to spend many hours and much of his wealth defending himself in legal battles. Eventually, legal troubles and ramifications from the Louisiana Purchase forced him to sell his interests in Louisiana by January 25, 1804. He moved to Spanish Texas and was permitted to establish a colony between Bexar and the Trinity River, an area that would be of interest just a few decades later to Austin. In 1806, Bastrop settled in San Antonio, where he owned a freighting business and gained influence with local inhabitants and government officials. By 1810, he was appointed the second Alcalde of the Ayuntamiento at Bexar where he continued to make strong allies in government.



A portrait of Moses Austin made before his death in 1821.

Austin also had several business ventures after the tavern meeting, reaching the height of success only to lose it all due to war, conspiracy, economic depression and a lack of money in the western United States. Austin's ventures included ownership of several lead mines in Missouri, as well as the founding of the Bank of St. Louis, the first bank west of the Mississippi River. By 1819, the bank failed and he was forced to sell most of his lead mining interests. After losing most of his wealth, he planned to get out of debt and amass a new fortune by settling an American colony in Spanish Texas. He was instructed to proceed to San Antonio de Bexar to present himself to the Spanish Governor of Texas. He arrived in Bexar on December 23, 1820.

Austin made his presentation to Antonio Martinez, the Spanish-born governor of Texas. Austin, however, received a cold welcome from Martinez, who was rigidly instructed not to permit foreigners, particularly North Americans, into Texas. Austin was ordered to leave Texas immediately despite being a Spanish citizen and having papers to prove it. Martinez refused to acknowledge Austin's documentation. "With much asperity and some passion," Martinez repeatedly ordered Austin out of the palace and out of Texas, according to a letter by Stephen F. Austin, who later recounted the story. Dejected, Moses Austin left.

At this point, fate stepped in as Austin left the palace, guiding him across the public square, where he saw the Baron de Bastrop.

Bastrop was living in poverty, but had considerable influence with the government and inhabitants of Bexar. Stephen F. Austin described the baron as "... a man of education, talents, and experience, and thoroughly initiated into all the mysteries of the government

Continued on Page 3

page 2



The signature of the Baron de Bastrop from a letter he wrote to Luciano Garcia, Governor and Political Chief of Texas on August 11, 1823.

Bastrop, his ignorance of my father's character and standing, or his indifference as to the success or failure of the scheme, would have defeated the whole project; for when my father met him in the square, on leaving the government house, he was determined to quit the place in an hour, being much disgusted and irritated at his reception by the governor." After the acceptance of his colony plan, Moses Austin returned to Missouri to implement it, but died soon after arriving. Before he died, Moses Austin begged his son, Stephen, to take over the business of colonizing Texas. Stephen accepted.

From 1821 forward, the Baron de Bastrop worked closely with Stephen F. Austin in the newly established colony. Bastrop was named commissioner for Austin's Colony and helped select a site for the city of San Felipe de Austin on the Colorado River. He also worked with Austin to navigate the diplomatic waters of Spanish and Mexican Texas as Austin's settlers, and other incoming Anglos, were quick to cause headaches for the local governing classes.

Had it not been for chance encounters decades apart between Moses Austin and the Baron de Bastrop, the path to Anglo colonization would have been quite different, and the name "Austin" less prominent.

For more information about Moses Austin or the Baron de Bastrop's work in Texas, please visit the Texas General Land Office to see original correspondence between the Spanish and Mexican governments with Anglo leaders. The Catalogue of the Spanish Collection, Part II can provide abstracted information about Moses Austin's work to form a colony or the Baron de Bastrop's interactions within Austin's Colony, and in Texas as a whole. The catalogue is available from the Land Office for \$15. ✨

house." Despite living in squalor, Bastrop aided Moses Austin, who had become weak from his difficult trip to Texas. Bastrop thoroughly examined Austin's plan to bring North Americans to Texas, examined Austin's papers, and understood the potential benefits of the colony. Bastrop approached the governor, told him of Austin's Spanish citizenship, and endorsed the plan. Martinez allowed Austin to stay.

On January 17, 1821, the political chief of the Eastern Internal Provinces sent his approval to the Ayuntamiento in Bexar. "I have the satisfaction of informing Your Lordships ... this Superior Political Chief and Provincial Deputation has seen fit to agree to the petition of Moses Austin, a resident of Missouri, who with three hundred families endeavors, after obtaining the corresponding permission, to move to that province ... with the laudable purpose of settling, cultivating and, consequently, safeguarding that fertile province from the savages." Austin's plan to bring 300 families to Texas could now begin.

"A mere accident had prevented the total failure of the first preliminary step," Stephen F. Austin wrote. "The absence of the Baron de

"A mere accident had prevented the total failure of the first preliminary step. The absence of the Baron de Bastrop, his ignorance of my father's character and standing, or his indifference as to the success or failure of the scheme, would have defeated the whole project."

—Stephen F. Austin



Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson invites you to join him at the inaugural Save Texas History Symposium: Discovering Spanish and Mexican Texas on Saturday, November 6 at the Stephen F. Austin Building, 1700 N. Congress Ave.

Featuring three of the most well-known and respected Texas historians today, November 6 will be a banner day for Texas history and Tejano Heritage. Speakers include former State Historian Dr. Frank de la Teja, current State Historian Dr. Light Cummins, and the Dean of Borderland Studies, Dr. Felix Almaraz, Jr. These three speakers will explain the significance of the Spanish and Mexican time period in Texas, and the way that Texas' unique history has formed who we are today. The symposium will be moderated by award-winning author Galen Greaser, a Texas General Land Office employee.

"It is important to remember that the first illegal immigrants didn't come across the Rio Grande. Rather, they came across the Sabine into Spanish and Mexican Texas," Patterson said. This event will

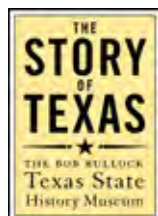
discuss the significance of Anglo settlement in Texas, and the crossing of cultures between Anglos from the United States, Tejanos in Texas, and the Mexican people. "There are important lessons to be learned by paying attention to history and remembering what happened here in Texas more than 170 years ago, and this event will highlight many of those lessons."

Also, this event will feature many opportunities for education that can't be found anywhere else. "We here at the Land Office have a sense of history because our agency has so much of it. We draw our heritage from the work that has gone on at the Land Office for the last 170 years, and what happened in Texas before that," Patterson said. "The Spanish Collection of the Texas General Land Office is widely considered the most valuable and comprehensive source of original documents on the settlement of Texas before 1836."

This event will include special tours of the Land Office Archives, special tours of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, hands-on exercises in 19th century land surveying, and workshops on papermaking and map printing, as well as workshops about genealogical resources in Texas.

You can register for this event by calling James Harkins at 512-463-3289, or via e-mail at james.harkins@glo.state.tx.us. Registration is \$25 per person before October 9, and \$35 after that date. Please remember, registration is limited, so please register early. This program was made possible in part with a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the generous assistance of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and support from TexasTejano.com and the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors. *

Thanks to our Symposium Sponsors



TEXAS ★ TEJANO.COM ©

MAP SPOTLIGHT

Spanish North America by John Thomson, 1814

Map #89224

by Mark Lambert

John Thomson's map of Spanish North America, part of the map collection of the Texas General Land Office, is based on one of the most influential maps in the history of Texas, Mexico and the American Southwest. The base map is Alexander von Humboldt's Map of New Spain, which was first published in French in 1809 and in English in 1810.

Humboldt was one of the scientific geniuses of the era, and considered an intellectual equal to President Thomas Jefferson. A German naturalist who traveled to Latin America in 1799 to document the continent for Spain, Humboldt spent four years studying the plants, animals and geography of South America. In 1803 he traveled north to New Spain (Mexico). Humboldt then spent approximately a year in Mexico, and due to the excellent reputation he already held, was granted full access to the archives of cartography there.



Spanish North America by John Thomson, 1814. GLO Map #89224.

With full access to the confidential reports and descriptions of Spanish North America compiled by the Spanish explorers over the preceding 300 years, Humboldt was able to draft a map of the area much more accurately than had previously been possible. He traveled as far north as Valladolid—present day Morelia, about 120 miles north of Mexico City—to make direct observations of the terrain himself. All information on the map from north of that point was obtained from the archives.

Before returning to Europe, Humboldt spent five weeks in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., including two weeks as the guest of President Jefferson in June 1804. At that time the United States had just acquired the Louisiana Purchase from France, and President Jefferson was anxious for any information Humboldt could provide on the region.

On June 6, 1804, Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under Jefferson, wrote about Humboldt: “We all consider him a very extraordinary man, and his travels, which he intends publishing on his return to Europe, will I think, rank above any other production of the kind. I am not apt to be easily pleased, and he was not particularly prepossessing to my taste, for he speaks . . . twice as fast as anybody I know, German, French, Spanish, and English all together . . . *I must acknowledge, in order to account for my enthusiasm, that he was surrounded with maps, statements, & all new to me and several of which he has liberally permitted us to transcribe.*” [Italics provided by this author.] As indicated above, Humboldt allowed Secretary of State James Madison and Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin to make copies of his draft maps which he would later finalize in Europe.

Humboldt's map of Mexico and the future American Southwest issued in 1809/1810 would be highly influential, and end up being the base map for several other attempts at mapping the area over the next 35 years. This was

Continued on Page 6

page 5



Texas as it appeared on Thomson's map.

usually done without giving Humboldt the credit he deserved—a frequent occurrence in that era. Texas bibliographer Thomas W. Streeter later called Humboldt's map of New Spain one of the six most important maps on Texas.

Lt. Zebulon Pike and his expeditionary party, which explored the southwestern portion of the new Louisiana Purchase for President Jefferson in 1806-1807, had access to Humboldt's map, either in manuscript or published form. Pike published his own map in 1810 along with an account of his expedition. Pike's map covered much of the same area as Humboldt's map, but with some improvements in the information, especially regarding Texas, based on Pike's personal observations.

Soon all mapmakers of the era were including Humboldt's (and Pike's) information on Mexico and the future American Southwest in their maps of the region. Atlases issued by map publishers Aaron Arrowsmith in 1810, John Pinkerton in 1811, and John Thomson in 1817, all contain maps of the region largely based on the work of Humboldt.

Thomson's map of Spanish North America was engraved in 1814, and issued as part of his New General Atlas in 1817. This atlas contained 74 hand-colored, engraved maps of different regions of the world. The maps contained several different dates of creation on each of them, but all between 1813 and 1817.

It's obvious that Thomson's map is based on Humboldt's version, and not Pike's. Thomson's map erroneously shows Texas as part of the province of San Luis Potosi, as shown in Humboldt's map, and not as its own province. Pike does accurately indicate that Texas is part of the Eastern Provinces of Mexico, however.

Humboldt's most important technical advancement in his Map of New Spain (also used by Thomson), was the use of hachures to depict relief on the map, such as changes in elevation, hills and mountains. Hachures, which are parallel lines showing the orientation of the slope, replaced the older convention of representing mountains or hills in profile, which looked somewhat like a long row of teepees (tipis). Pike's map exhibits the use of the older technique of mountains and hills in profile. The general use of hachures was eventually replaced by the use of contour lines approximately 100 years later, though hachures are still used on occasion to represent peaks, especially with steep slopes.

Humboldt's Map of New Spain, and thus by derivation, Thomson's map, were not entirely accurate in their depiction of the future American Southwest, especially in their placement of forts, rivers, missions and mountains. However, the cartography in them was a vast improvement over earlier efforts and a very significant achievement for their time.

Thomson's Map of Spanish North America is a visually appealing map, with its use of colors, its medium-size format perfect for display, and its representation of an important era in the mapping of Texas. Not until 1830 and the publication of Stephen F. Austin's more detailed Map of Texas would a more accurate map of Texas be available. Thomson's Map of Spanish North America is available from the Land Office for \$20. ✨

GLO Translator Honored with Prestigious Award

The Sons of the Republic of Texas named Galen Greaser, Spanish translator for the Texas General Land Office Archives, the runner-up for the 2009 Presidio La Bahia Award. "As a history buff, I'm especially honored to see one of our employees recognized for his dedication to Texas history," Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. "This expertly researched book offers a rich narrative about early land settlement in South Texas, an intriguing subject for landowners, history students, attorneys and genealogists."



Galen Greaser is accompanied by Commissioner Jerry Patterson to receive the award from the Sons of the Republic of Texas.

The Presidio La Bahia award was established in 1968 and recognizes excellence in preservation of antiquities and research into Texas' heritage, with special emphasis on the Spanish Colonial period.

Greaser's book, "New Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas," explores the beginning of the legal establishment of private land ownership in the territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. The Texas assertion of control over the trans-Nueces region produced a unique and sometimes controversial chapter in the history of the public lands of Texas. The book provides insight into the historical context of the Spanish and Mexican land grants in the trans-Nueces and their assimilation into the Texas land system after the Mexican-American War. The narrative explores how these grants fit in the big picture of colonization, settlement and development of the region. Readers will also learn about Spanish and Mexican property law, the intricacies of the land granting process, and mineral rights as they relate to these grants. Issues such as the border fence, mineral rights and challenges to prevailing titles continue to call attention to these ancient grants.

The award-winning book, "New Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas," is available for just \$15. For more information about this book, or the resources in the Texas General Land Office Archives, please call 512-463-5277. *

AUSTIN FIGHTS BACK

JUNE 1824 AND THE FATHER OF TEXAS FIGHTS BACK!

This week in Texas History, brought to you by this station and the Save Texas History program of the General Land Office.

June 22, 1824. Brazoria County. Karankawa Indians are fearsome. Over six foot tall and covered in gator grease to ward off mosquitoes, they fight with spears and have been known to eat their enemies.

After several Kronk raids on his colony, Stephen F. Austin orders settler Randal Jones to retaliate.

At dawn, Jones and his men catch a band of twenty Kronks along a creek west of the Brazos. Spears are no match for muskets, and only five Indians survive. Austin wins this one, but the Kronk continue to harass him for years.

Stephen F. Austin fought back 185 years ago,
This Week in Texas History.



HEAR THIS AT WWW.THISWEEKINTEXASHISTORY.ORG